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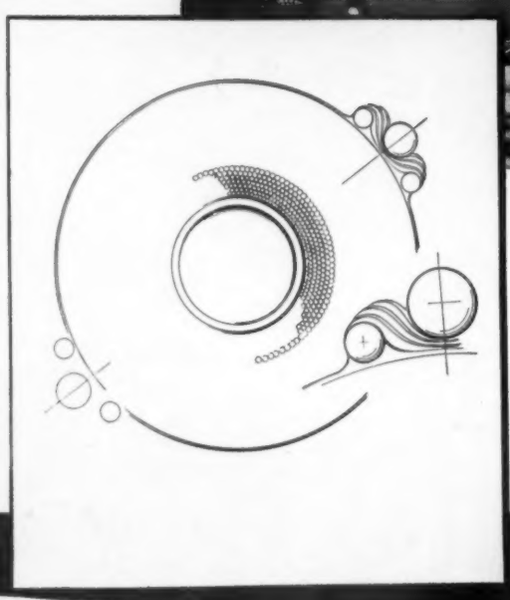

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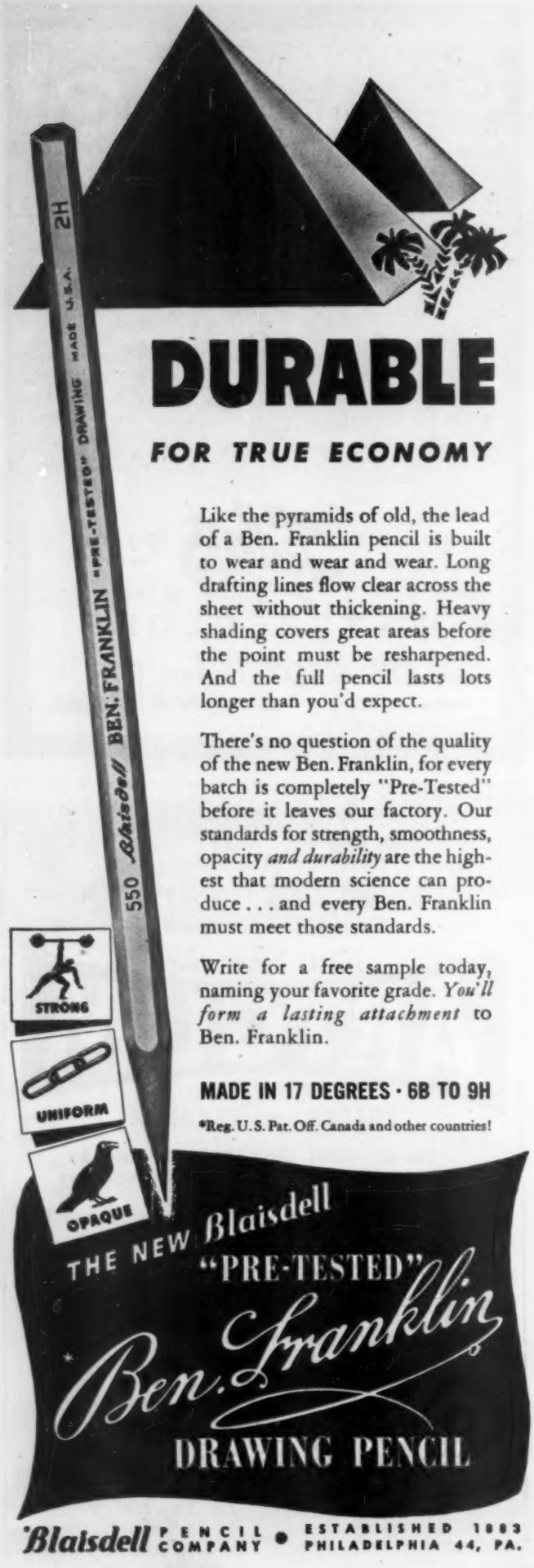
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Notes and Footnotes

Bassford

Inadvertently, a note concerning our cover for April was omitted. Its author, Wallace Bassford, is a St. Louis artist who had his first New York Show in 1944. The exhibition consisted of landscapes and figure paintings in oil and a number of drawings.

Bassford studied with Pennell, Hoke, Von Schlegel, Wuerpel and George Elmer Browne. His work has received numerous awards in Western exhibitions and he has executed a number of portraits for public buildings. He devotes himself to both advertising and fine arts.

The Cover

The drawing on our cover was made by Julien Binford while he was engaged in doing a series of pictures for *Life* magazine which appeared in their issue of November 20, 1944. It is one of the many studies the artist made of the wartime activity of New York Harbour.

In technique this drawing presents the most unusual combination of media we have encountered in some time. The pen and ink drawing, made directly on the spot, was reinforced with smudges of printer's ink that have given the drawing its weight and depth. In discussing this procedure with us Mr. Binford stated that he found the combination made it possible for him to make many more drawings than any other line and tone process he knew of.

The artist is a Virginian, who, while studying in Europe on a Ryerson Travelling Fellowship, devoted himself to painting abstractions. On his return to America he settled down on his farm near Richmond, soon finding his Negro neighbors more appealing as subject matter than abstract forms. It was his sympathetic painting of the Negro which brought Binford his wide acclaim—first in Virginia, and shortly thereafter throughout the art world.

Bill Mauldin

Hats off to Frederic L. Painton's story on Bill Mauldin in the current issue of *Saturday Evening Post* (March 17). It is one of the warmest, human interest stories about a soldier-artist to come out of the war thus far. Get it and read it.

Bill Mauldin's daily cartoons of two G.I. characters appear in more than 200 American newspapers through United Syndicate. In them, Mauldin has caught the spirit and ironic humor of the American soldier abroad. More than one of his cartoons brought complaint from his superiors until General Mark Clark, recognizing his morale value, gave the young artist his official blessing.

Mauldin is a great favorite with the troops. As a combat soldier with wound stripes he knows war. Though some of his cartoons are not fully appreciated by the citizenry at home, they strike a universal chord in the hearts of his buddies. Now unattached, and equipped with a jeep of his own, Mauldin often visits the front lines under fire. And wherever he goes, he enjoys a personal popularity seldom accorded an artist anywhere, any time!

Lt. Jon Whitcomb

Among the recently returned artists in uniform is Jon Whitcomb, who has been serving with the Navy since the summer of 1942. The *Cosmopolitan* for February devoted four pages to a group of spritely wash drawings Lt. Whitcomb made during a tour of duty in the Pacific.

If these drawings are an indication, and we believe they are, the future work of this artist will show a new character, which in nowise will reveal anything but benefit for his three years of Navy service.

Sir Joshua's Hospitality

The following passage from Irving's *Oliver Goldsmith* gives an amusing glimpse into the personal life of that English master.

"There was something singular in the style and economy of Sir Joshua's table that contributed to pleasantry and good-humor, a coarse, inelegant plenty, without any regard to order and arrangement. At five o'clock precisely, dinner was served, whether all the invited guests were arrived or not. Sir Joshua was never so fashionably ill-bred as to wait an hour perhaps for two or three persons of rank or title, and put the rest of the company out of humor by this invidious distinction. His invitations, however, did not regulate the number of his guests. Many dropped in uninvited. A table prepared for seven or eight was often compelled to contain fifteen or sixteen. There was a consequent deficiency of knives, forks, plates, and glasses. The attendance was in the same style, and those who were knowing in the ways of the house took care on sitting down to call instantly for beer, bread or wine, that they might secure a supply before the first course was over. He was once prevailed on to furnish the table with decanters and glasses at dinner, to save time and prevent confusion. These gradually were demolished in the course of service, and were never replaced. These trifling embarrassments, however, only served to enhance the hilarity and singular pleasure of the entertainment. The wine, cookery and dishes were but little attended to; nor was the

Notes and Footnotes

fish or venison ever talked of or recommended. Amidst this convivial animated bustle among his guests, our host sat perfectly composed; always attentive to what was said, never minding what was ate or drank, but left every one at perfect liberty to scramble for himself."

Recent Deaths

The unexpected death of Max Kalish on March 18 remoyes one of our ablest sculptors. Born 54 years ago in Poland, he was brought to this country as a child and received his early art education in Cleveland, Ohio. Later he studied in New York and Paris.

Kalish made his reputation about twenty years ago by portraying the working man in action. Since then he has contributed notable works to the large exhibitions and is represented with several important public monuments.

The bronze statuettes which constitute Max Kalish's marathon series, "Fifty Great Men of 1944," are now on exhibition at The Smithsonian Institution in Washington. Our readers were introduced to Max Kalish in Ernest Watson's article that appeared in our *January 1945* number.

* * *

John F. Carlson, veteran landscapist, died on March 20. Long regarded as a fine teacher and ardent interpreter of wooded landscape, Carlson was one of the pioneer settlers of the Woodstock Colony of artists.

The artist, who died at 69, had enjoyed a long and successful career as a painter in oil and watercolor. His great passion was the woods, and no artist of our time has made more capital of this aspect of Nature's handiwork than he. Of this Carlson said: "I've spent a good part of my life painting trees. Naturally, I've become pretty well acquainted with them. Excellent they are and, for me, the most fascinating 'sitters.'"

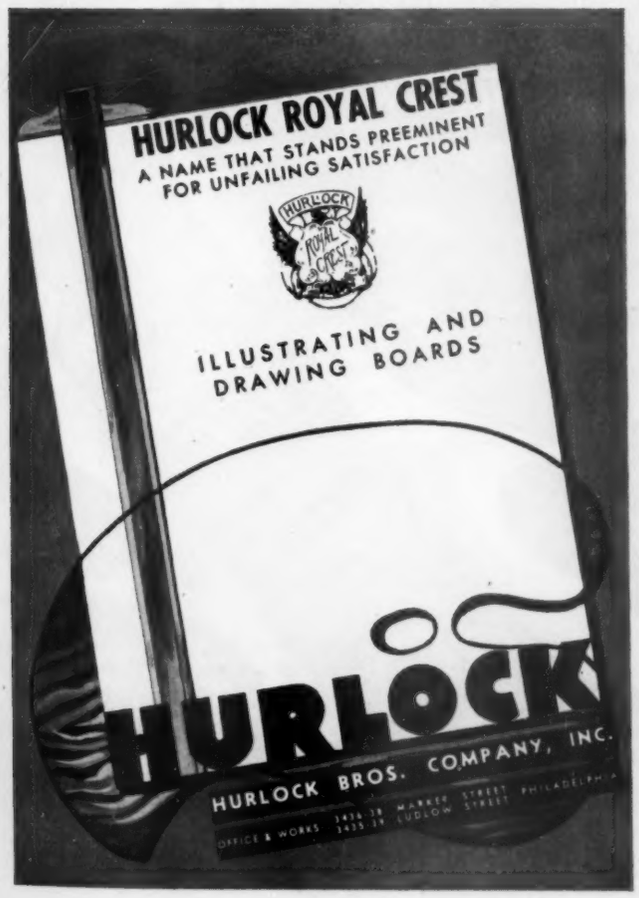
Mr. Carlson's paintings have been acquired by many of our leading museums.

Taubes to Wisconsin

Readers of the Taubes' Page will be interested to learn that Mr. Taubes will conduct several art courses at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, during its summer session.

Tally-Ho!

"After my Picasso-Bouguereau piece in the March issue reached the broad public," reports Fred Taubes, "Picasso's disciples went a-hunting for the pelt of the blasphemist with the fervor of the ancient Janissarios. I have always suspected that the love for Picasso is in the nature of a religious cult rather than an issue of art."



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TAUBES' page

SEND YOUR QUESTIONS to Frederic Taubes, prominent American painter and authority on technical matters. He will answer them all personally when a self-addressed and stamped envelope is enclosed. Questions of most general interest will be printed on this page. Address Mr. Taubes care of American Artist, 330 West 42nd Street.

Art and Love of Money

Leonardo da Vinci, while stressing in his Trattato della Pittura the importance of the painter's self-criticism, stated: "When his judgment is superior to his work, an artist never ceases improving—*if the love of gain does not retard his progress . . .*"

Make haste slowly though in agreeing with Leonardo, for here is another voice: "Therefore," it cries out, "I humbly beg that your Royal Majesty may punish the obstinate insolence of these subordinates who do not satisfy my claims." And a year later: "At last I have received the money from Genoa, but I was cheated of two hundred ducats because the sum was not paid in gold. . . . Your Majesty will undoubtedly have the matter rectified." Who could write with painful monotony, year after year for over half a century, such insistent letters dealing with nothing but money matters? No lesser man than Titian himself.

And to what circumstance do we owe Holbein's great portraits? Erasmus of Rotterdam, at that time living in Basel, gives us the answer in a letter to Peter Aegidius of Antwerp: "The arts are freezing hereabouts . . . and Holbein is on his way to England to scrape together a few angels." (An "angel" was about 6 shillings.)

When Michelangelo died, his heirs counted enough scudi, found in a strongbox, to make up $100,000. Moreover, there were enormous real estate holdings left—seven houses and eight farms, all bringing good returns. It seems that there must have been a healthy acquisitive sense and a true love of gain in the great master to do so well.

"As I am working for the public," says another, "I must continue to amuse them." It is hard to believe—it is Francesco Jose de Goya y Lucientes speaking.

If, as Leonardo has said, love of gain retards the artist's progress, it should follow that disregard for gain would encourage his genius. This, of course, is not true. Titian, Holbein, Michelangelo, Goya and countless other great masters simply adored material rewards; painters, especially the good ones, have excellent appetites—I know it instinctively. As to moral powers, they are, as I see it, entirely unrelated to the powers that generate esthetic values; moral and esthetic preoccupa-

(Continued on page 30)

TAUBES' QUESTION AND ANSWER DEPARTMENT

Mr. K. C., Bronx, N. Y., asks:
Were the distortions in El Greco's paintings deliberate or were they used without conscious thought? Were Cezanne's distortions deliberate? Are subconsciously conceived distortions more convincing than those planned?
Answer: It would seem that El Greco's distortions were planned. This assumption is based on the fact that many of his actual portraits are normally proportioned. At the same time, when these realistic portraits were being painted he was doing other works which were radically conditioned as far as anatomy is concerned. Also lighting and brush strokes were treated in a more expressionistic manner. Cézanne, on the other hand, apparently was not conscious at all of what he had achieved. After reading Cézanne's letters where he discusses his own ideas and aims, one becomes instantly aware that these ideas are not in keeping with the results he produced. With Cézanne's imitators, of course, it is a different matter; they were quick to seize upon his unpremeditated inventions and to traffic in ready-made distortions and abstractions.

As for a convincing or an unconvincing use of distortions—from the above it is clear that there are no laws which decree what is and what is not legitimate in art. It is the scope of the painter's **talents which legitimizes any means he** may use. With a great painter, by some mysterious alchemy, even forced effects will be convincing.

Mrs. S. I. L., Anacortas, Wash., writes:
What is the best way to reduce one's painting equipment to a minimum while traveling?
Answer: Carry one or two sets of stretchers and cut the canvas to these two standard sizes. The finished work may then be rolled (with the painted surface outside). A palette which can be folded is also quite practical. Such a palette should be cut in the middle and equipped with hinges on one side and two small pegs on the other, to keep the two leaves apart. Thus, the paint between the two palette leaves will remain well protected. Use cobalt siccative to effect quick drying of paint.

Mrs. H. M. H., Los Angeles, Calif., asks:
Is a painting medium consisting of three-fourths of a good spar varnish and one-fourth of turpentine reliable for permanent painting?
Answer: The commercial spar varnish is composed of oil (any oil—fish oil, for instance), resin and siccative (both the resin and the siccative may be entirely unsuitable for artists' purposes). Since even a "good" spar varnish remains a mystery as far as its whole composition is concerned, it is not recommended for other uses than that for which it was originally manufactured, that is, for varnishing floors, furniture, etc.

Mrs. L. S., Omaha, Neb., asks:
What medium should one use for painting on glass when a dull finish is desired?
Answer: Use watercolors and add to one oz. of water as much oxgall as the tip of a penknife will hold. Oxgall reduces the surface tension of water and prevents it from forming drops on the glass.
Mr. E. L. C., Troy, N. Y., asks:
I have observed the conformity to life size proportions in most portraits painted in oil. Is there any good reason why the painter should adhere to this standard?
Answer: There is no reason at all why a painter should adhere to any arbitrary standard. Practically all of the early Renaissance portraits were less than life size. The Flemish painters such as Van Eyck, Memling, and others, and later Dürer, Botticelli, Pollaiuolo, and other masters of the early Renaissance painted portraits on small panels. The head of Mona Lisa, for instance, is only half life size. The habit of painting life size or more than life size portraits started in the High Renaissance and continued through the Baroque period. During the time of the Rococo, the portraits were generally smaller. All this points to the fact that the size of a portrait depends greatly on the dimensions of interiors which are to house the paintings.

Mr. J. W., Omaha, Neb., asks:
I have ground Indian red pigment with heavy oil and minute quantity of siccative. A few days after the application of this color to the canvas, heavy wrinkles appeared. What is the cause of it?
Answer: When using a *top* dryer (such as manganese or cobalt siccative) in connection with a very heavy oil medium and pastose application of paint, the quickly forming thick skin on top of the paint will invariably wrinkle because it expands and increases its bulk while absorbing oxygen.

Mrs. H. S. L., New Bedford, Mass.
I have transferred a drawing to a coarse canvas using the method which you suggested in *Studio Secrets* but the impression was not sharp enough. How can I effect a more clearly discernible tracing?
Answer: Apply first to the canvas a burnt sienna imprimatura (or cover it with retouching varnish). Use a sheet of thin tracing paper covered with charcoal dust for transfer paper. Trace the drawing to the canvas within a few days, that is, before the imprimatura has had a chance to harden well. Because of the slight tack, even on a coarse canvas the tracing will stand out clearly.

American Artist

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by Julien Binford
Courtesy of the Midtown Galleries Cover

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WHERE TO SHOW

E. GLOUCESTER, MASS., Galleries of North Shore Arts Assn. July 1-Sept. 9. 23rd Annual Exhibition of North Shore Arts Assn. For members (membership $5). All mediums and sculpture. Jury—each artist allowed one work exempt from Jury action. Prizes. Entry cards & works due June 15. Mrs. L. Edmund Klotz, Sec'y., Ledge Rd., E. Gloucester, Mass.

GLENDALE, CALIF., Glendale Public Library, Kenwood at Harvard, May 6-June 1. 2nd Natl. Competitive Exhibition. For all American artists. Mediums: oil & watercolor. Fee: 50c entry; limit 2 entries. Jury. Cash prizes. Entry cards due Apr. 26; works, Apr. 28-29. F. Wayne Hill, 1225 Geneva St., Glendale 7, Calif.

GREENSBORO, N. C., Weatherspoon Art Gallery. Nov. 5-30. 2nd Ann. Internat'l Textile Exhibition, art department of The Woman's College. Awards of $500 will be made in two principal divisions of original designs: woven textile; printed textiles—4 purchase awards in each. Entry blanks by Sept. 18; exhibits, Sept. 25. The Woman's College, Greensboro, N. C.

JERSEY CITY, N. J., Jersey City Museum. May 7-28. Painters and Sculptors Society of New Jersey, Ann. Exhibition. For all artists. Mediums: oil, sculpture, watercolor, gouache, pastel, black and white. Fee: $3.50 for non-members. Jury. Prizes. Entries due Apr. 30. Ward Mount, 74 Sherman Place, Jersey City, N. J.

LOWELL, MASS., Whistler's Birthplace (art museum), Year Round Exhibition. For professional artists. All mediums except large sculpture. Fee: $1.50. No prizes. Receive works all time; show 2 months. John G. Wolcott, Pres., 236 Fairmount St., Lowell, Mass.

MERIDEN, CONN., Technical School Auditorium. May 6-14. Twenty-First Annual Exhibition of Meriden Arts & Crafts Assn. For all artists & craftsmen. Mediums: oil, watercolor, sculpture & prints—handicraft. Membership fee $1. Jury. Cash prizes. Works due April 25. Virginia L. Thomas, Curator, 41 Washington St., Meriden, Conn.

MONTGOMERY, ALA., Museum of Fine Arts. June 3-June 30. 5th Ann. Jury Exhibit of Water Color Society of Ala. For all artists. Mediums: watercolor. Fee: $1 per entry non-members. Jury. Prizes. Entry cards due May 4; works, May 7. Dawn S. Kennedy, Pres., Montevallo, Ala.

NEW YORK, N. Y., Nat'l. Academy Galleries. Sept. 25-Oct. 13. Audubon Artists 4th Ann. For all artists in U. S. Mediums: oil, watercolor, pastel, prints, drawing & sculpture. Fee: $3 for non-members. Jury. Prizes, awards, medals: $1,000. For prospectus: M. M. Engel, 470 W. 34th St., New York 1.

NEWPORT, R. I., The Art Association of Newport. July 2-23. 34th Annual. For all living American Artists. Mediums: oil, watercolor, pastel drawings, prints & small sculpture. No fee. No Jury. No Prizes. Entry cards due June 11; works, June 18. Address inquiries to The Art Association of Newport, 76 Bellevue Ave., Newport, R. I.

OHIO, Ohio Galleries and Colleges. 21st Annual Traveling Circuit Exhibit of the Ohio Watercolor Society. November through June. For Ohio born or resident artists. Mediums: watercolor. Fee: $3. Jury. Entry cards & works due early October. Mrs. Robert Gatrell, Sec'y., 1492 Perry St., Columbus, Ohio.

RIDGEWOOD, N. J., Ridgewood Municipal Bldg. Postponed to May 19-June 10. Ridgewood Art Assn., 10th Ann. Subject: "Portrait of Ridgewood." For all artists. Jury. Purchase prizes. Entry cards due Apr. 30; works, May 11-12. Mrs. Robt. D. Gatrell, 246 Mountain Ave., Ridgewood, N. J.

RUTLAND, VT., Rutland Free Library. June 1-Sept. 30. Mid-Vermont Artists Exhibit. For Vt. residents of high-school age or over who are U. S. citizens, and invited guests. All mediums. Fee: $1 for non-members. Jury. No prizes. Entry cards due May 10; works, May 17-19. Katherine K. Johnson, Pres., Meadowbrook Farm, 139 Killington Ave., Rutland, Vt.

SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO, Museum of New Mexico Art Gallery. Aug. 1-Sept. 3. 32nd Annual Painters & Sculptors of Southwest. For painters & sculptors of Southwest. Mediums: oils, watercolors, pastels, graphic mediums, prints (must be framed) & sculpture. No Fee. No prizes. Entry cards due July 15; works, July 20. Mrs. Dorothy Morang, Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

WHERE TO SHOW

SPRINGFIELD, MASS., Museum of Fine Arts. May 6-27. Members Spring Exhibition of the Springfield Art League. For members. Mediums: oil, watercolor, prints, drawing & sculpture not previously exhibited in Springfield. One work in ea. class accepted. Membership fee $3. No jury. Popular prize $25. Works due Apr. 29. Miss Mabel Ross, Sec'y., 4 Benton Place, Springfield 9, Mass.

TULSA, OKLA., Philbrook Art Center. May 1-31. Oklahoma Artists Annual Exhibit. For all Oklahoma artists. Mediums: oil, watercolor, prints. Fee: 50c per entry. Jury. Cash prizes. Entry cards & works due Apr. 24. Art Dir., Philbrook Art Center, 2727 Rockford Road, Tulsa 5, Okla.

YONKERS, N. Y., Hudson River Museum. April 30-June 3. Mediums: oil & sculpture. Fee: 50c for non-members. Jury. No prizes. Works due Apr. 25. Erik Kaeyer, Sec'y., 30 South Broadway, Yonkers, N. Y.

ZANESVILLE, OHIO, Art Institute. May 1-31. 4th Ann. May Show. For present & former residents of Zanesville & vicinity. All mediums. No fee. Jury. Small prizes. Entry cards Apr. 25, works, Apr. 28. Susan Swartz, Dir., Art institute of Zanesville, Zanesville, Ohio.

SCHOLARSHIPS & AWARDS

THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY, WASHINGTON: Two $360 and three $180 four-year scholarships in creative painting in career program leading to B.A. degree and certificate in Art Education. Course given at Phillips Memorial Gallery Art School under direction of C. Law Watkins. Art treasures of Washington utilized in program. For details and illustrated catalog: Pres. Paul F. Douglas, The American University, Washington 6, D. C.

ATLANTA, GA.: HIGH MUSEUM SCHOOL OF ART: Two Rich's, Inc. three-year scholarships, $750 each, to two 1945 high school graduates in southeastern, states. Three original works required in any drawing or painting medium, together with letter of recommendation from applicant's art teacher or principal and transcript of high-school credits. Entry blanks on request. High Museum School of Art, 1261 Peachtree St., N. E., Atlanta, Ga.

BLOOMFIELD HILLS, MICH.: CRANBROOK ACADEMY OF ART: Full fellowships, tuition grants, offered in architecture, painting, sculpture, design & ceramics. Applications and works due June 15. Address all inquiries to Registrar, Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, Mich.

GUGGENHEIM MEMORIAL FOUNDATION has appropriated $200,000 for Post-Service Fellowships to students and artists in the Armed Forces for 1 year's research or creative work in fine arts. For U. S. citizens 25 to 40 years old. Must present plan for proposed study. Fellowships will be available for use after discharge from Service. Applications should be filed as early as possible. Henry A. Moe, Sec'y Gen'l, John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, 551 Fifth Ave., New York 17, N. Y.

MONTICELLO COLLEGE, ALTON: Ten awards of $400 each in any of the fine arts. For graduates of accredited high schools. Students must submit samples of their work and meet entrance requirements of the College. Applications & works due May 1. A. N. Sullivan, Dir. of Admissions, Monticello College, Alton, Ill.

NEW YORK: CENTRAL PARK SCHOOL OF ART: Twelve half-scholarships through competition to high school graduates: 3 each in Commercial Art, Fashion Illus., Story Illus. & Fine Arts. Those competing must bring samples of their work to the school on May 26th, 9 A.M. to noon; out of town students mail samples, with return postage, up to June 24. Arthur Black, Dir., 58 W. 57th St., New York 19, N. Y.

OHIO UNIVERSITY, ATHENS: The College of Fine Arts offers a limited number of Graduate Teaching Assistantships to qualified students holding Baccalaureate degree with major in art from an accredited college or university. Provides $500 with exemption from resident tuition fee. Applicants send official transcript of undergraduate credits, photograph & references to Dean of College of Fine Arts, Athens, Ohio.

PORTLAND, MAINE: SCHOOL OF FINE AND APPLIED ART: One year's free tuition in the regular Art Course will be awarded through competition. For seniors in high schools of Maine. Examples of work must be submitted by June 30. School of Fine and Applied Art, 97 Spring St., Portland, Maine.

SCHOLARSHIPS & AWARDS

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS: Kate Neal Kinley Memorial Fellowship provides $1,000 for one academic year of study under program approved by Committee. Place of study may be in any approved educational institution or with an approved private master. Open to graduates of the College of Fine and Applied Arts of Univ. of Ill. and to graduates of other institutions of equal educational standing, whose principal studies have been in art, architecture or music. (Applicant must not be more than 24 yrs. June 1st.) Applications due May 1st. For details and application blanks: Mr. Rexford Newcomb, Chairman, Kate Neal Kinley Comm., Urbana, Ill.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS: Lydia E. Parker Bates Scholarship in Fine Arts provides scholarships in varying amounts for students, undergraduates and graduates in Art, Architecture, Architectural Engineering, and Landscape Architecture, who show promise in their field; who have superior academic records; and who cannot attend the University without financial aid. Grants good for 1 yr.; may be renewed. Applications should be filed with the Dean, College of Fine and Applied Arts, 110 Architecture Bldg., Urbana, Ill.

RIDGEWOOD, N. J.: Gerald Leslie Brockhurst scholarship of $500. Awarded through Ridgewood Art Assn. to N. J. artists under 25 years of age. Candidates must be U. S. citizens. Required to submit 3 paintings in oil. Competition closes Nov. 1945. Mrs. Chas. Whitson, Chrm., 414 Overbrook Rd., Ridgewood, N. J.

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY: The College of Fine Arts announces the following scholarships to be granted by competition on July 15: Art, one $400 and four $200 scholarships; Architecture, one $400 and four $200 scholarships. Entries due July 2. Applications due before June 30. Dean H. L. Butler, College of Fine Arts, Syracuse Univ., Syracuse, N. Y.

COMPETITIONS

ARMY ART CONTEST for Army personnel in the U. S. will be sponsored by Special Services Div. and will culminate in an exhibit at the Nat'l Gallery in Washington, D. C. in July. Every Army post in the U. S., including Army Hospitals, will choose representative work to be included. All mediums. Entry blanks & information may be secured from Special Service Officers at Army posts.

LIMITED EDITIONS CLUB: 3rd Book Illustration Competition. For all American artists—professional or amateur. All mediums. (For details see pages 28-29, February 1945 AMERICAN ARTIST). Prizes total $12,000. Entries before July 1. All correspondence & entries to George Macy, The Limited Editions Club, 595 Madison Ave., New York 22, N. Y.

K-9 MEMORIAL FOR DOGS KILLED IN SERVICE, World War II, will be erected in Washington, D. C. An award of $500 will be given for design chosen for the memorial. Ideas or sketches due Apr. 30. Harry Miller, Ex. Sec'y, Gaines Dog. Research Center, 250 Park Ave., New York 17.

McCANDLISH AWARDS: Tenth Annual Poster Design Contest sponsored by McCandlish Lithograph Corp. of Philadelphia. For all American artists and Students in U. S. & Canada. 24-sheet poster advertising any gasoline. Jury. War Bond prizes and certificates of merit. Posters due May 8. H. A. Speckman, Sales Mgr., McCandlish Lithograph Corp., Philadelphia, Pa.

SPERRY MEMORIAL COMPETITION: Sperry Gyroscope Co. and Alumni Ass'n of Amer. Academy in Rome collaborative competition will seek design for memorial to Dr. Elmer Sperry. Teams of 2 or 4 representatives of architecture, landscape architecture, painting & sculpture may compete. Closing date May 14. Prizes: $1,300. American Academy in Rome, 101 Park Ave., New York 17.

POSITIONS

DRAFTSMEN needed: U. S. Government agencies need engineering draftsmen, especially women. Most positions in Washington. Salaries from $1,752 to $3,163 per annum, including overtime pay. 48-hour wk. No written test required. Sample of work and appropriate experience or courses in drafting required. No age limits. See Announcement No. 328 for details. Application form & announcements may be obtained from first- or second-class post offices, U. S. Civil Service Regional Offices, or U. S. Civil Service Comm., Washington, D. C. Address applications to U. S. Civil Service Commission, Washington 25, D. C.

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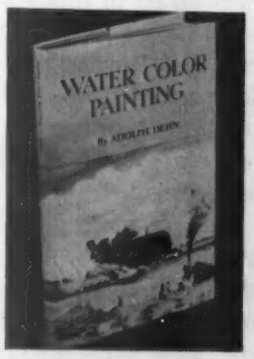
TWO NEW STUDIO BOOKS

WATER COLOR PAINTING

by Adolf Dehn



A "how to do it" book which gives the stages of water color painting and complete data on paper, brushes, color and the variations of technique. Eight full color plates by this popular American artist are included together with notes on how other leading water colorists work.

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Send for Catalog of Studio Books

THE STUDIO PUBLICATIONS INC.
381 FOURTH AVE. **NEW YORK 16**

VERA BOCK
DESIGNER

BY NORMAN KENT

Decoration for "Oscar Wilde's Fairy Tales."

Among the Fifty Books of the Year 1945 (the exhibition of which has just opened at the New York Public Library), there was included by the jury a group of twelve children's books. These are distinguished by considerable variety, imaginative illustration and fine printing, in spite of the difficulties of wartime manufacture. The designing and illustrating of Juveniles has attracted some of our finest talents, who must meet a severe test eventually in their real audience—the children themselves.

One such designer and illustrator whose work is represented in this year's selections is Vera Bock. Her book, *A Ring and A Riddle,* is a fairy tale translated from the Russian and published by J. B. Lippincott Company. It would be difficult to imagine a more suitable illustrator for this book. For not only was Vera Bock born in Russia, but her style and temperament provided just the right note for its embellishment.

Here is a clear-cut example of a book that shows an unmistakable harmony of component parts. Often we see books that present good illustration poorly supported by type, or good typography in the same book with indifferent decoration. And while it is equally true that fine books—harmonious books—are frequently the result of collaborative efforts among designers, illustrators, printers and binders, as many of the *Fifty Books* will show, the ideal result is attained when the designer and illustrator are one. But the designer-illustrator should be equally competent in both departments of type and illustration, as is Miss Bock, and *not* a professional in just one and a trifler in the other! The names of Rudolph Ruzicka, Allen Lewis, T. M. Cleland, W. A. Dwiggins, Warren Chappell and Valenti Angelo come instantly to mind among the limited number of American artists whose contributions have been marked in both fields. These distinguished artists either served apprenticeships to fine designers or gained their all-round proficiency through independent study and experimentation.

Perhaps the reason for the rarity of the combination lies in the fact that the average American art school has been woefully negligent in providing instruction in typographic fitness along with courses in book illustion. Many otherwise well-trained students are graduated with only the foggiest notions about the reproduction and printing of drawings by various processes. A few of the larger schools, to be sure, operate their own private presses and are thus in a position to give their students an introduction to the principles of good printing and to the designing of decorations that harmonize with type they, themselves, have set in the composing room.

The average artist, concerned primarily with interpretation and illustrative techniques, feels his job is finished when he turns in his drawings to the publisher. And if on publication he is astonished to see his illustrations poorly reproduced, the fault can often be traced back to his own ignorance: either he did not know the kind of paper the book was to be printed on, having made no attempt to find out; or he had made his illustrations with an eye to their effect as pictures, without concern for their appearance on the page in combination with type.

Vera Bock cannot be censured for such lacks. As designer *and* illustrator of her books, each is planned like a good house,

Decoration for "Bow Bells," Longmans, Green & Co., 1943

with paper, type and decoration harmoniously interrelated. The crispness of her style with its clean line is ideally suited to adorn type, and in her selection and arrangements of the latter she has been most successful.

In looking over a collection of the books she has illustrated, the first thing that impresses one is the excellence of her book jackets. Almost without exception they are printed in several colors appropriate to the character of the book. The leading figure is usually the dominant motif. The artist's natural posteresque style and her ability to summarize graphically the book's content make her jackets not only attractive to look at, but from a sales standpoint, invariably *invite* closer inspection of the book. When an artist can succeed in doing this, he not only attracts a personal audience but his whole work becomes a more valuable property to his publisher.

Apart from their distinction as decorative illustrations, Vera Bock's original drawings are fine examples of good craftsmanship. Those in open line, accented with small blacks, appear to have been drawn with a flexible pen that permitted the line to swell and taper under various pressures. But, no. It was all done with a brush so skillfully handled that never a whisker protrudes to rob the edge of its suavity. The illustration on page 11 was selected to show this character of line and to represent this style of working—a manner Miss Bock has used in illustrating a number of her books for children.

The drawings reproduced on pages 8 and 9 show the artist's unmistakable love of decoration and her use of solid areas of black relieved here and there with white line, the whole brought into juxtaposition with fine black lines.

The decoration used in the heading shows Miss Bock in her latest and as yet unpublished (in book form) work. Designed to be printed in a grayed color as a full-page decoration, it is reproduced here in full black and white. When finally printed in the forthcoming Peter Pauper Press edition of *Oscar Wilde's Fairy Tales* in the typography we have come to expect from Peter Beilenson, it is bound to be a star in both their crowns!

The other two drawings (reproduced in two different scales to show how admirably Miss Bock's work will stand reduction) were made for *Bow Bells,* a re-telling of the famous Dick Whittington tale by Katharine Gibson. In this little book, she has made a series of eight full-page decorations in which, it will be seen, amusing conventions are employed. In effect these drawings resemble wood engravings or appear to have been done on scratchboard, but they are the work of the brush and precious little white tempera *in certain places.* These spirited decorations complement effectively the whimsey and color that has made this tale of old London a favorite for generations of children. Although author and illustrator have never met, their art has been combined in five books, all published by Longmans, Green & Company.

The illustration of the highwayman and his lady on page 10 is a departure from Vera Bock's usual linear manner. In spite of its tone (it is in tempera and pencil) it retains that rhythm and grace that is characteristic not only of this illustrator's technique but of her interpretations as well.

This brings us to the personality of the artist and her background, which in this case has given her art its essentially foreign flavor. Vera Bock was born in Russia in the City of St. Petersburg. Her Russian mother was a concert pianist; her American father, an international banker. When still a child, the Bocks were obliged to leave Russia at the outset of the Revolution. They managed passage on the last train to leave the city, and after a long trip across Siberia to the Orient finally arrived in the United States.

Vera's education as a child in Russia included study in four languages—Russian, French, German and English—and as a child she read books in all of them. In America she continued her studies under private instruction. The older she became, the more art attracted her. During several trips to Europe, she studied drawing and painting under European artists. A year spent in England introduced her to wood engraving, illumination and heraldry—all three techniques which reveal themselves in her work.

Text continued on page 11

Another brush-drawn decoration for "Bow Bells."

Vera

Tempera and pencil illustration for "Love's Enchantment," Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., 1944

From an illustration in several colors, greatly reduced. "Little Magic Horse," The Macmillan Co., 1942.

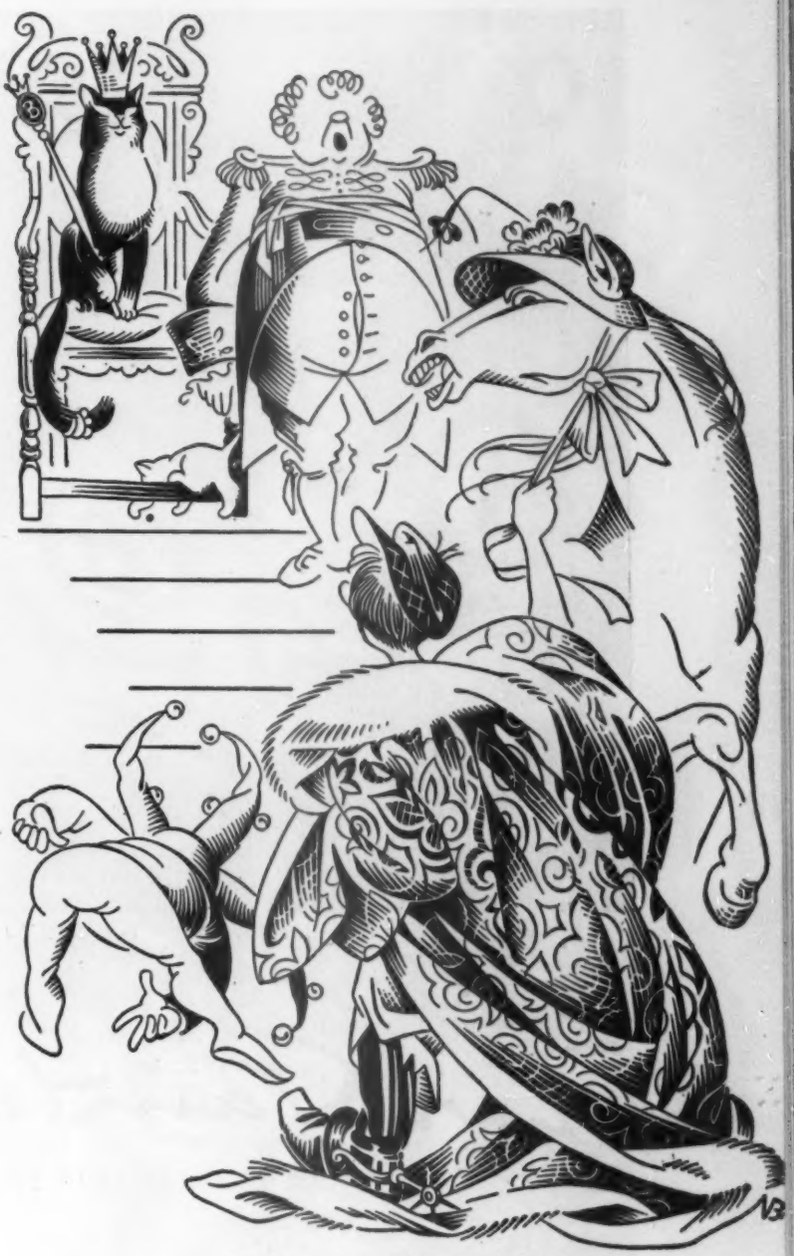
Decorations for "A Ring and a Riddle"

Bock

While in England she also became interested in printing and photo-engraving processes. This fascination for the mechanics of her art continued until she had gained enough confidence to put her knowledge to a practical application. She began her career as an illustrator with *Tangle Coated Horse* in 1929—a career that now numbers about twenty-five books.

After ten years of experience in illustrating, the artist was able to put her practical knowledge of type and layout to use. The first book she designed and illustreated *completely,* according to her own ideas, was *The Girl Who Would Be Queen,* published by A. C. McClurg (1939). It became one of the *Fifty Books* selected in 1940. Since that time, each publisher Vera Bock works for has been glad to have her design typographically the books she illustrates.

Vera Bock made her place—first, in the Juvenile field and more recently as an illustrator of general literature. With her decorative style which embodies a truly sensitive interpretation of a book's content, her abilities and ambitions should carry her far. Her delight in her art —both as inspiration and as a career—is reflected in her face. The character and style of her illustrations is the next best thing to a self-portrait.



Chapter decoration for "King of the Cats," William Morrow & Co., 1942

Published by J. D. Lippincott Company

Benday has been used here to represent the brick red in the originals which, in combination with the black, makes these decorations for "A Ring and a Riddle" very effective.

Along the Harbor *Oil, 40 x 50* *Private Collection*

Two Painters

A STUDY IN CONTRASTS BY ERNEST W. WATSON

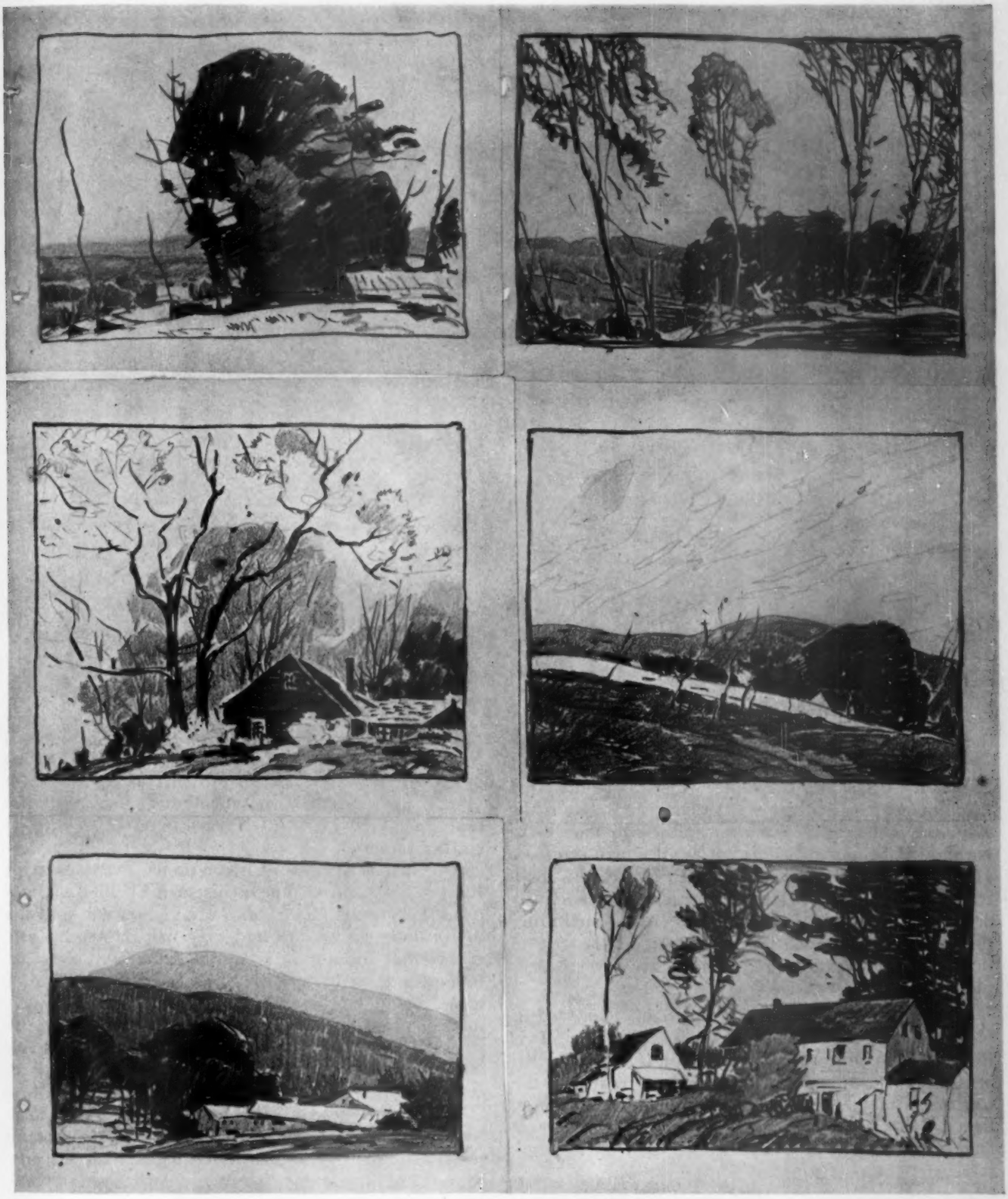
In selecting Roy Brown and Marsden Hartley for comparative study we bring together two painters who present the greatest possible contrasts in every aspect of their lives and work.

This is as true of their purpose as of their accomplishment. Brown started his career with crystal clear vision. He knew what he wanted to do. He is an avowed disciple of tradition. All his life he has painted in that tradition alongside such eminent artists as Edward W. Redfield, Daniel Garber, Elmer Schofield, George Gardner Symonds and John F. Carlson, national Academicians, all of whom, as Homer Saint-Gaudens has neatly put it, "believe in interpreting the gracious side of life by way of sound technique."

Hartley's career, by contrast, was one of continuous experimentation. He never semed to know exactly what he wanted to do. Throughout his entire professional life he appears to have been groping for the unattainable, sampling first one philosophy then another, producing a great diversity of work under the conflicting influences of traditionalists, rebels and primitives. On following pages we shall consider in some detail the results of this restless search for an unknown goal.

Brown's career, as I have said, has been directed by a steadfastness of purpose that has produced a consistent pattern in all his work. He has not deviated from his first youthful ambition to translate the landscape with as much fidelity to its natural charm as is possible with paint on canvas. To attain this goal he painted most of his early canvases outdoors—summer and winter—in the *premier coup* method. Working directly in the field gradually gave way later to studio painting based upon preliminary studies in pencil and small oil sketches.

But whether working directly in the field or more reflectively in the studio, what he has given us is a report of things seen by the physical eye. In him there is nothing of A. P. Ryders' mysticism. We could not think of Brown saying, as did Ryder: "Have you ever seen an inchworm crawl up a leaf or twig and there, clinging to the very end, revolve in the air, feeling for something, to reach something? That's like me. I am trying to find something out there beyond the place on which I have a footing." Text continued on page 14



Roy Brown

These pencil sketches from nature were selected from a great many examined in Roy Brown's studio. They are reproduced here at about one-half size. In these we glimpse the same characteristics that make his pictures distinctive—a superb sense of design, vigorous handling and good taste.

Souhegan Valley Oil, 40 x 50 Private Collection

Marsden Hartley might have said that, but not Brown.

Brown, to be sure, has done his groping but it has been for more power rather than for visions. He is the last man to be found wandering about in the murky realm of imagination. He is not at all a man of mood. He is designer rather than dreamer. He sees his landscape before him in bright light—each element clearly defined and playing its decorative part in a thoughtfully organized composition. He is master in this art of definitive orchestration. His pictures are never loosely put together, never casual.

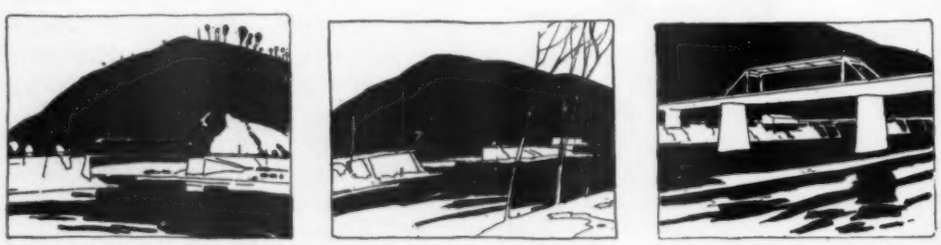
Brown's pattern interest is as invariably expressed in his pencil sketches from nature as in his canvases. It is interesting to note that his pencil insists, as does his brush, upon well ordered arrangements, resolving the confusions of the landscape into a few simple planes. Few painters, I dare say, so completely anticipate their finished work in a tiny pencil study.

The outstanding characteristics of Roy Brown's painting are the flat, tapestry-like patterning of landscape forms and his technical vigor. He attacks his canvas with bold, direct strokes that seem to record his first intention. And these flat (in value) areas are alive with vibrant color. This is well demonstrated in our color reproduction of *The Little French Port,* one of Brown's smaller pictures.

Roy Brown began his career under the tutelage of Kenyon Cox and George Bridgeman at The Art Students League of New York. He then went to Paris to continue his studies under French masters, a procedure that was almost a "must" for an ambitious art student in those days. And, like so many others, Brown stayed on in France where he painted, exhibited and sold pictures until the First World War when he returned to his native land. Since then he has maintained a studio in New York, spending his summers at Wilton, New Hampshire.

He is well represented in museum collections and has been a prominent figure in the painters' world for many years. Although he is known principally for his oils, he is one of our outstanding watercolorists and is president of the American Watercolor Society.

These experiments in composition demonstrate Roy Brown's interest in pattern, his care in so designing his subject as to achieve the most telling presentation.



THE LITTLE FRENCH PORT OIL, 20 x 24 BY ROY BROWN

ROY BROWN'S PALETTE

Flake white

Cadmium lt.

Cadmium orange

Chinese red or vermillion

Rose madder deep

Sienna raw and burnt

Umber

Emerald green

Cobalt blue

Ultramarine blue

Marsden Hartley

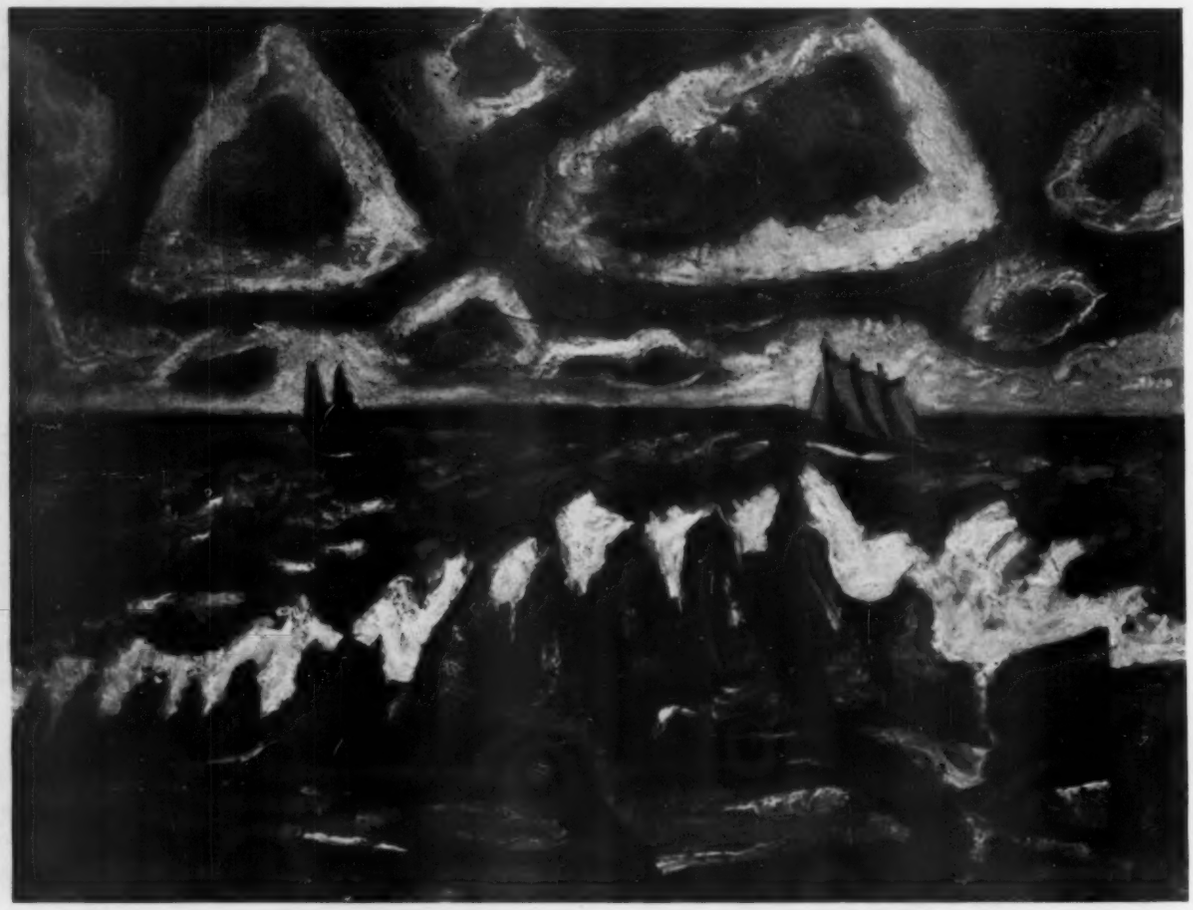
Marsden Hartley, unlike Roy Brown, never seemed to know exactly what he wanted to do. As a young man he evidently had some difficulty in deciding whether he should make painting or literature his career. He divided his time between the two arts. Indeed he continued to express himself in verse after he had finally become absorbed largely in his painting—his writing is highly regarded by his admirers today.

"Even in old age," says Monroe Wheeler in his essay on Hartley in *Feininger-Hartley* published by *The Museum of Modern Art*, "he spoke of his life work as a struggle, a discipline, a research and an evolution, as if he were still, in his own opinion, a promising youth."

It is not surprising that recognition of Hartley's genius—if genius it be—was delayed until the closing years of his life. (He died in 1943.) Experimenters and innovators are not likely to achieve the acclaim that is invited by a more consistent production in a given direction.

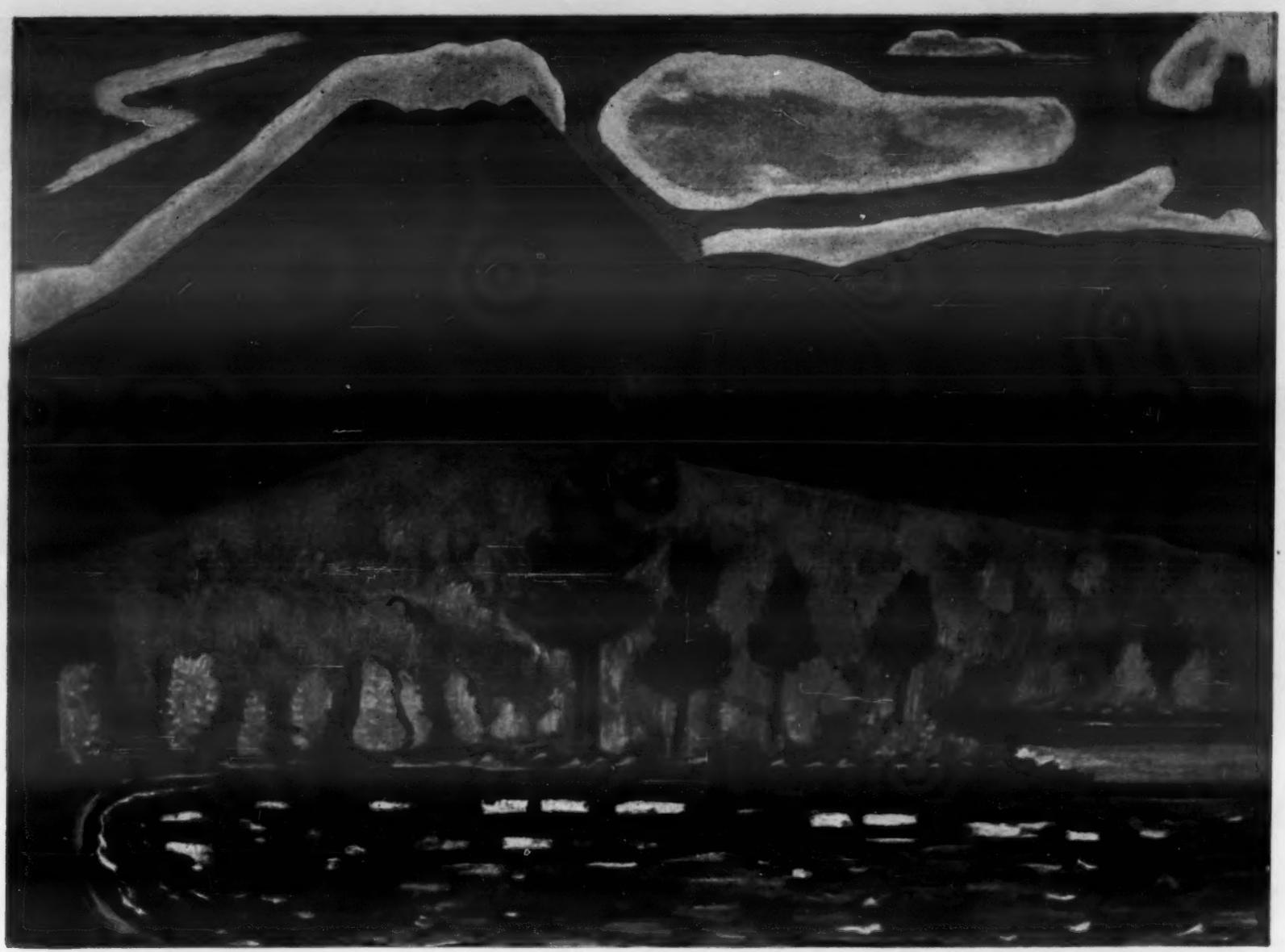
Referring to his experiments with a variety of painting philosophies, Mr. Wheeler tells us that Hartley "was a man of many artistic enthusiasms, and in brilliant prose he testified to his admiration for a somewhat disparate group of artists. First there was the Italian Segantini; then the Americans: the supremely poetical landscapist Ryder, and intensely Yankee Homer, and even neglected men such as Twatchman and Fuller; then other Europeans, Piero della Francesca, Masaccio, Rembrandt, Courbet and Cezanne, de la Fresnaye and Rouault; and increasingly, toward the end of his life, the genius of the past: the portraitists of Fayum and the Coptic weavers. It is possible to observe the influence of this one and that in particular pictures throughout his career, or to subdivide his life work according to contemporary schools—impressionism, abstraction, expressionism—but our sense of these individual influences is transcended by the simplicity and grandeur of the production of the last decade. Then he painted with easy command of all his past styles, and attained a nobility of design and elegance of color which place him high among the artists of our century.

"He was the type of artist," continues Mr. Wheeler, "who sought freedom from subject matter as such, but on the other hand, as he developed he judged his style not as innovation but for its expressiveness with regard to a series of themes which cast a spell upon him. The most obvious instances of this are in still life, but in his portrayal of human figures we see the same search for essential form and less concern with individual characterization. Perhaps his greatest preoccupation, in which he achieved the most striking differentiation of



Northern Landscape (Off the Banks) 1926-37 Oil on board 18 x 24

Collection of Max E. Friedmann



Mt. Katahdin, Autumn, No. 1. 1939-1940, Oil, 30⅛ x 40. The University of Nebraska Art Galleries. Hall Collection.
This is one of several variants of the same theme.
Reproduction by courtesy The Museum of Modern Art.

SMELTBROOK FALLS *Oil on Board 28 x 22*
Painted by Marsden Hartley in 1937
Collection, City Art Museum of St. Louis.

style and originality of design, was landscape: the Alps; the mountains of the Southwest, and Mt. Katahdin and the lighthouses and the stormy waters of Maine. Each is epitomized in thematic variations and certain uniquely impressive masterpieces."

In the Museum of Modern Art publication referred to, Hartley's writings are quoted at some length. The following excerpts, though fragmentary, throw at least some light upon an understanding of this strange artist's philosophy.

"What do pictures mean anyhow—I have been trying to find out for at least half a lifetime.

"I have no way of knowing what they do to the spectator, all I know is that a good picture will do a lot, and a bad picture will do a lot more. I will insert here the statement of Jean Cocteau: 'the privileges of beauty are enormous, it affects even those who have no experience of it.' *(Les Enfants Terribles.)*

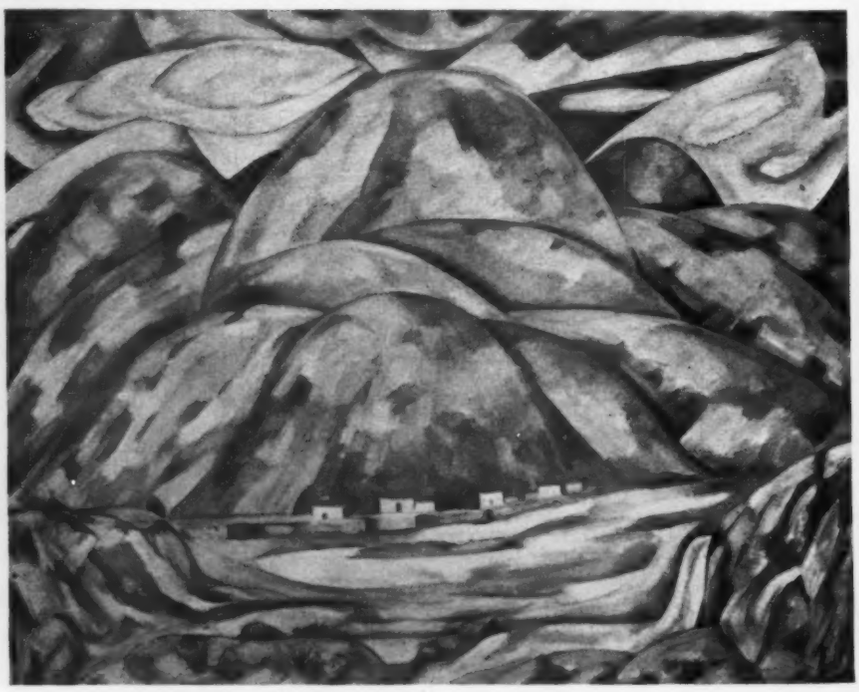
"For myself I have walked toward the good ones, because they have told me that pulling the trick off with something like intelligence is all there is to it to me, for I have no interest in the subject matter of a picture, not the slightest. A picture has but one meaning—is it well done, or isn't it—and if it is, it is sure to be a good picture whether the spectator likes it or not.

"And I remember the old gag that we have heard so often, and is perhaps still being used: 'I don't know anything about art, I only know what I like,' and the only answer to that is—do you?'

"Gertrude Stein says that if you enjoy a thing, you understand it, and plenty of people enjoyed her 'Saints' play who cer-

(Continued on page 35)

CASH ENTRY MINES
NEW MEXICO 1920
Oil on canvas 28 x 36
Alfred Stieglitz Collection



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WALTER BIGGS

AN INTERVIEW BY STEPHAN LEE RENWICK

An hour of good conversation with Walter Biggs in his studio projects from the past a pleasant picture of a mellow illustrator's world. For Biggs began his career in horse and buggy days when even artists could enjoy the amenities of a more graceful era.

That was before the building of the great wall, the wall that divides all art into two parts—"fine" and "commercial." To be on both sides of that wall at the same time is a feat few have accomplished. Biggs, since the wall sprung up, has managed it; the painters have claimed him as one of them even in the days when he was devoting so much of his time to magazine illustration. They made him a member of the National Academy of Design and invited his pictures to the national exhibitions. Of late he is more prominent in the painters' world than in publication circles—most of his illustration work appears in a single magazine, the *Ladies' Home Journal*—and he enjoys the privilege of painting pretty much what he pleases.

He always painted in the *way* he pleased. He was fortunate of course in working principally at a time when editorial policies were not controlled by the man in the street through reader surveys; when publishers were naive enough to put more stock in the opinions of art editors than those of the delicatessen man who answers questionnaires. Biggs recalls those early days with nostalgic pleasure. "You have no idea how different they were," he says. "Going to see an art director was like visiting him in his home. You could drop into his office without an appointment and be received like a guest. He seemed to have plenty of time to talk with you. All of us older chaps like to remember such men as Drake of Century, Meers of Harpers, Chapin of Scribners, and more recently Henry Quinan of the Companion—men who really loved pictures. I should add that the type even now is not extinct, for Frank Eltonhead, Art Editor of the *Ladies' Home Journal*, is one who retains the old time graciousness in spite of present-day pressures.

"Imagine a thing like this happening today," continued Biggs. "I was walking home one winter evening long ago when I passed the door of the building where the old *Metropolitan* had its offices. It was dark, about six o'clock, and it was snowing. I had a portfolio of samples under my arm. On the spur of the moment I thought I'd take a chance and go in. The office was dark except for a drop light over a desk at which a secretary was still working. She told me, what I suspected, that everyone had gone home.

"Suddenly from the dark a voice called: 'Have you some pictures there to show?' A gentleman came out of the gloom into the circle of light. He led me across the room to his office and asked me to show him what I had. I spread out my pictures. He looked them all over. 'Do you want to sell these?' he asked. I answered him that nothing would please me more. 'I'll take this one,' he said, standing a painting against his wall. 'And this,' picking another. Two more were selected for purchase before I went, and manuscript for a story was thrust into my hand.

"My patron, I learned, was not Homer St. Gaudens, then art editor of *Metropolitan,* but R. H. Russell, the owner. For several years I did quite a bit of work for the magazine and always through Russell himself."

Biggs chuckled as he recalled his first meeting with Drake. "Drake was a great fellow," he said, "and everybody liked him immensely but he had one peculiarity that I discovered that day when I sold him my first picture. I was just out of art school and was dead broke; in fact I had actually spent my last nickel for car fare to get to the Century office. You can imagine my joy when Drake said he would buy that picture! 'How much do you want for it?' he asked. 'Fifty dollars,' I replied. 'That is too much,' retorted Drake. 'I'll give you $47.50 for it.' He saved $2.50 for Century, and by following this practice day in and day out the sum total saved for the publishers must have been considerable. The deduction was always so slight that no one ever

The above subject is a watercolor from a place in Virginia to which Walter Biggs returns whenever New York lets him.

Plates by courtesy Gatchel & Manning

got peeved. We looked upon it merely as an amusing foible of a very lovable man."

It was natural that the magazines should turn to Biggs when there were stories of the South to illustrate. Biggs was born and brought up in Salem, Virginia, and though he has always spent most of his time in his New York studio, he returns as often as possible to his old home where he loves to paint the familiar scenes and the people with whom he grew up. No one, of course, can portray the colored folk with greater understanding. No one can better translate the color and the spirit of The Southland.

Biggs is a genuine Southerner, a gentleman who unconsciously does the right thing at the right time—not because he has been taught to do it, but because it is utterly natural for him to act that way. I don't imagine you could hurry Biggs much. He is deliberate, takes enough time to do things properly. He would rather do a picture over again than feel dissatisfied with any detail. When he delivers his illustration to the *Ladies' Home Journal* office in Philadelphia, likely as not he will raise some question about the picture with Art Editor Frank Eltonhead. "Do you think maybe I've subordinated that figure a bit too much?" he may ask. If in discussion both think the point well taken, Biggs will carry the picture back home and start an entirely new one. He never stops on any work until it "feels" right. He has no quota of so many jobs for such and such a financial result. His only quota is his own satisfaction in each piece of work he finishes.

Walter Biggs is one of the few illustrators extant who owes nothing to the camera. He draws and paints directly from the model. After playing around with small sketches in pencil and gouache, he calls in models and makes careful drawings. Then without the models he begins to develop his pictures in color, experimenting with composition until he gets what he wants. After that the models are again summoned, and in the final rendering of the figures he paints directly from them. There is no photography at any point.

Biggs used to paint his illustrations principally in oil. Now he prefers gouache, having come to the conclusion that this medium does better in reproduction. His painting equipment is amazing. His palette is a large, white porcelain platter. On the raised rim of this he squeezes tube watercolors; mixing is done in the depressed area. A large jar of white tempera and three or four rather scrubby-looking brushes complete his outfit.

Biggs' studio is without doubt the most disorderly one in New York. In spite of its size—it is unusually large—the visitor does well if he finds his way to a chair without stepping on the litter of sketches that almost cover the floor and have already received the footprints of former visitors. Every corner is cluttered with such stuff as only an artist's studio can boast—costumes, draperies, properties, screens, mirrors, cabinets, files of magazines, old canvases, a lay figure and some broken-

Text continued on page 24

Walter Biggs' studio probably has the distinction of being the most disorderly one in town. But he knows where everything is!

Below we see Biggs working on a final rendering of the "Dunkards' Foot-Washing Day" which was preceded by the studies on the two pages following. His palette is a porcelain platter. The jar is tempera white with which he mixes his watercolors when he desires a gouache effect. Three or four rather worn brushes complete his painting equipment.

On these facing pages we see how Walter Biggs studies his pictures. The charcoal sketch below was his first graphic visualization of an idea that he had long been mulling over. The three large halftones were reproduced from three separate studies in gouache on 26- x 36-inch sheets of water-color paper. His gouache technique permits considerable experimentation on each study. He uses a minimum of water and, consequently, is not much bothered by the buckling of the sheet. The final painting is mounted on heavy illustration board.

In the picture for which these four sketches are preliminary studies Biggs depicts the annual Foot-Washing Day of the Dunkards, a non-conforming religious sect adhering to the primitive simplicity of the early Church. The foot-washing ceremony occurs in a tent, vaguely seen in the background.

A story illustration for the Ladies' Home Journal *painted by Walter Biggs. The original, in color, was on a 30 x 40 canvas. Courtesy the Curtis Publishing Co.*

down furniture. Biggs simply never gets around to straightening things out. On the balcony is a collection of some 600 costumes, principally of the century following the American Revolution. A thick layer of dust overlays the entire conglomeration—a cleaning woman's nightmare.

Well, it doesn't matter. In the midst of that confusion many handsomely conceived pictures are produced. Symphonies in color spring up out of the all-enveloping dust.

Biggs came to New York in 1904. He studied at the old Chase School under Robert Henri and Kenneth Hayes Miller. For a time he roomed with George Bellows who was also enrolled in the school. There was no teaching of illustration as a special subject, nor did Biggs ever have a course of training elsewhere, in what was to be his livelihood. He has carried on Henri's tradition. Classes he has taught have produced some of our best illustrators. He has always looked upon illustration as just another application of a painter's creative skill to which he owed all the resources at his command.

This charcoal-and-wash sketch is a first study for an illustration of an episode in a Negro church.

O'HARA'S AMATEUR PAGE

Rhythm

My last experiment for amateur watercolorists emphasized the importance of the path of vision. Such a path implies the element time, as it takes time for the eye to move about the picture from point to point.

In the assignment and subsequent practice picture we perhaps stuck so consciously to the path that we may have had too little concern with what could be seen and enjoyed along the way. After all, the only excuse for a path is that it takes you to a succession of points of interest in a certain order and sequence.

Do not be discouraged if lessons like the last one, or this, produce a labored and self-conscious effort, rather than a relaxed and natural one. Assuming that it *is* possible to teach art to a certain point, we realize that any assignment of higher mental level than mere doodling must be directed at first. Subsequently it may become easier and at last simply take place as if by instinct, without intruding into the main current of our creative urge.

As the eye moves along the path of vision, the things it reports to the brain and mind can give pleasure or annoy us.

Since the mind of the average person of cultivated taste abhors monotony, make sure that as the eye strays over your picture it does not encounter a procession of areas of the same size or shapes or color. Such a sequence is a mere repetition and should be used only when we wish, on rare occasions, to produce eye fatigue with the resultant hypnotic lull. This whets the curiosity for the next thing to be seen. Although rhythm in painting, just as in music, is a motive repeated, a picture may have this and still be completely lacking in rhythm, like a broken Victor record that repeats itself.

Brunete—Spanish War by Luis Quintanilla

While the mind abhors monotony, it is also annoyed when it detects the opposite extreme—too much variety. It is by no means original to fill a picture with unrelated elements of design; anyone who wishes can concoct surprising mixtures of shapes, colors or subject matter. That is why Dali's work resembles that of so many dull artists who share his technical facility and urge to make themselves conspicuous, but lack his knack for getting publicity.

There are other things besides monotony and heterogeneity which the mind dislikes. It rejects anything along the path of vision that it recognizes as obvious, garish, lewd, photographic, ostentatious or dull.

There are things, too, that the mind does like, chief among them, as far as rhythm is concerned, is the recognition of something that it has seen recently—something that is familiar yet freshly presented.

For this reason we need a basic motive which can recur in slightly different form.

This basic motive may be a shape, line, colored spot or direction. Quintanilla, in his picture—"Brunete—Spanish War"—used an angle like a roof (No. 1 in my analysis) and with this, two minor or accompanying motives, a small curve or arch and a criss-cross line (2 and 3).

Notice that the motive is never exactly repeated, but that as you progress into and about the picture you find yourself on familiar ground, and from time to time are given a chance to rediscover details like others seen earlier. The painter must make the observer feel that he is cooperating in the experience of the picture, not having it handed to him.

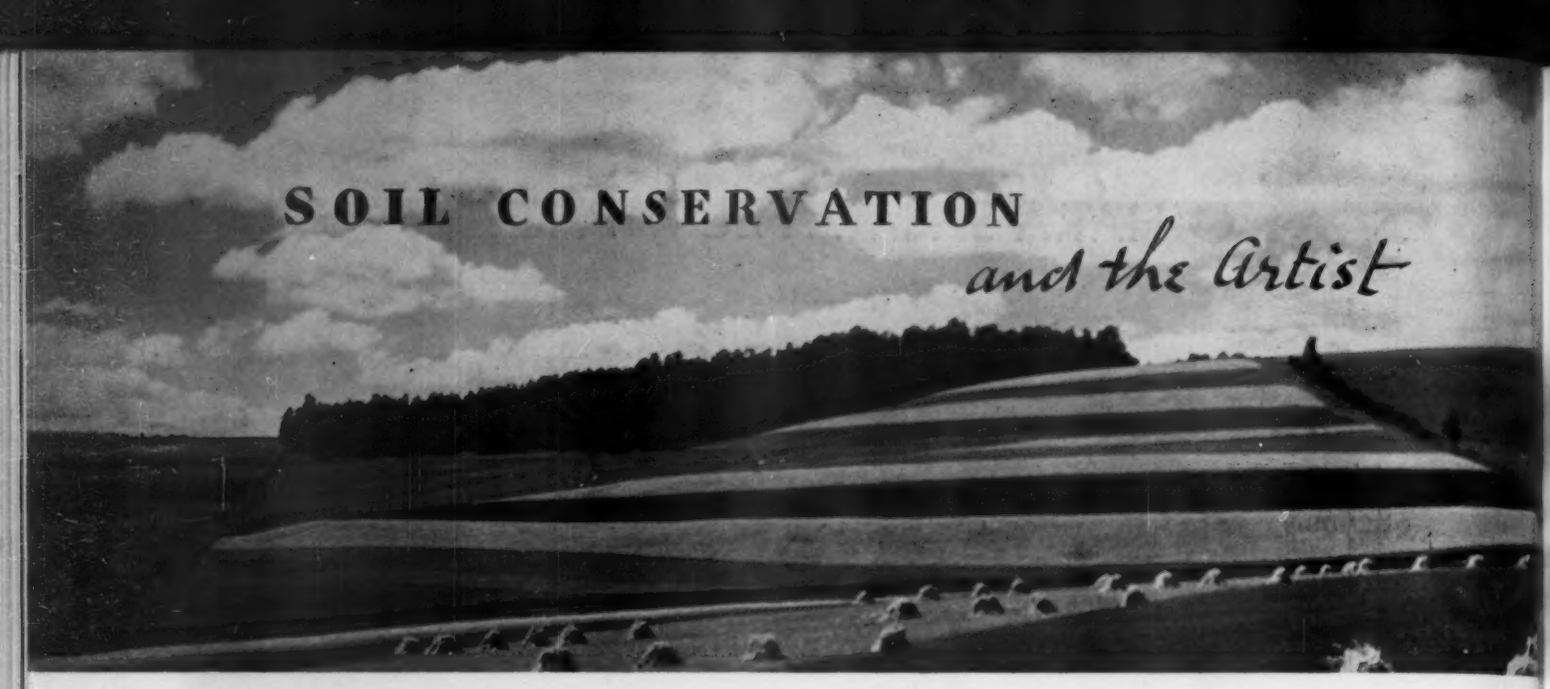
If you want to tackle rhythm the hard way, choose an angular motive.

The easier way is to use flowing curves. For this you get less credit from the knowing critic or brother artist.

If the feeling of rhythm comes from living movement, surge and repetition of emphasis, almost any motive will serve. This feeling should be produced by the legitimate means of relating elements of space, line and accents, within the composition and along the path of vision.

You may achieve a sluggish stir in the observer by showing him a representational picture of some subject that reminds him of rhythm: musicians playing, blowing trees, waves, dancers and the like. In doing this you have merely tagged your work as "Rhythm." If you have, by such obvious labeling, evoked memories of someone else's work in one of the other arts, you have indulged in illegitimate rhythm.

But—legitimate or not—the field is fertile, and awaits you.



SOIL CONSERVATION and the Artist

WILLIAM CLAYTON PRYOR *introduces painters to the* **NEW AMERICAN LANDSCAPE**

The artist and the farmer are a lot alike. Both are creative workers, sublimating the same old primal urge through different channels, and both work mainly alone.

For these reasons, painters and farmers tend to be strongly individualistic. They have their own ways of doing things, whether they're plowing a field or preparing a gesso ground, and the reckless wight who undertakes to show them what he considers *better* ways, sometimes is just sticking his neck out. However, when both the painter and the farmer make the same mistake—and when the painter keeps on making it after the farmer begins to learn better—it seems worth the risk.

William Clayton Pryor, the author, is head of the Education Section of the Soil Conservation Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture. As a young man he set out to become an artist; was a student at the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts when we got into World War 1. After the Armistice he studied for a few months at the American Art Center, Bellevue, Seine-et-Oise, near Paris. Back in America he accepted a job as newspaper reporter and eventually found his way into the Soil Conservation Service.

Although I abandoned ideas of a professional art career years ago, in favor of writing, I've never stopped being interested. I particularly like landscape painting but unfortunately for my complete aesthetic enjoyment, since I joined the staff of the U. S. Soil Conservation Service a few years ago I have acquired the deplorable habit of looking at all landscapes from the viewpoint of the conservationist—and what I see is distressing.

Ever since white men first settled in Virginia in 1607, American history has developed against a bizarre and tragic background of waste and exploitation of natural resources. As a result, while we have as many acres of land as we had three centuries ago, we don't have anything like as much productive soil as we used to have. It's been washed completely off a hundred million acres of once good cropland, and in varying degrees off two hundred million acres more, because we've been "mining" our farmland to get all we could out of it instead of keeping in mind that future farmers would need it too.

Particularly, it has been a common—and dangerous—practice to plow fields in straight rows—and the straighter they were, the prouder the plowmen were. This practice is dangerous because straight rows on sloping land cause soil erosion, which washes a lot of our irreplaceable natural wealth downstream.

When American painters first began putting the American farm scene on canvas and paper, it was of course only natural that they should use straight rows in their fields, too. What bothers me is that they still do it. There were nearly thirty farmscapes in a recent national exhibition, and all showed fields on sloping land with straight rows, or other bad farming practices. Even painters like Curry, Benton, N. C. Wyeth, and Peter Hurd—who were represented in this show—with essentially rural experience on which to draw, continue to re-state these out-moded farming methods. I have never seen a painting showing the new farming techniques in any gallery or exhibition I've visited.

A number of commercial illustrators have portrayed such modern farm practices as contour cultivation and strip-cropping in their advertising work, but I am forced to the conclusion that the easel painters of America haven't heard about it yet. It's a trifle surprising, since so many of them have rural backgrounds or live and work in farming or ranching country.

This does not mean that American artists are oblivious to the soil problem. During the past ten years, many have dramatized the tragedy of land exploitation and soil wastage with work such as Alexandre Hogue's "Dust Bowl," and similar paintings and lithographs. What it boils down to is this: Our painters have recognized the problem—probably because of its dramatic aspects—but perhaps not its real significance. And they have *not* recognized the solution.

Gullied hillsides, I'll admit, are apt to be more dramatic than smooth hillsides—bad news often is more exciting than good news. I don't know whether the painters of rural America find erosion-inducing straight crop rows more interesting than the safer contoured rows, or not. I can conceive that straight rows might occasionally be preferable, but I think the contoured fields of modern conservation farming offer the artist far more interesting and diverse opportunities.

To the painter who likes patterns and textures, contour cultivation—with alternating strips of corn, wheat and alfalfa, for example—presents exciting possibilities.

If it's a matter of background for a genre subject, it

Alexandre Hogue is representative of a rather small group of American painters who have recorded the dramatic and tragic aspects of land exhaustion and soil erosion by wind and water. His "Dust Bowl" shows vividly what once good agricultural land in the Southern Great Plains looked like after wind erosion had turned it into a sandy waste. Few artists, if any, however, have painted the restoration of the so-called "dust bowl."

can be made both authentic and more interesting than usual by a subdued pattern of curving furrows, terraces, or crop strips.

Some painters might even want to experiment with making this new design for farming the main thesis of a painting. While there are many possibilities in black and white, the opportunities in color are even more interesting. There are seasonal variations in contrasts, and invitations to make—as the late Charles Hawthorne used to urge—"beautifully ugly spots of color" come together. It would be interesting to see the result of such an essay.

We can get at least an idea of the possible result, thanks to the late Grant Wood. Not that Wood ever painted farmscapes portraying modern methods. In fact, his "Spring Turning" and his "Spring Plowing" are excellent examples of how sloping land should *not* be plowed. Yet many thousands of acres of rich farmland in Wood's part of Iowa—and all over the state—and millions more all over the United States are marked by a spreading pattern of level crop strips curving around the slopes. This is a kind of farming, incidentally, that yields more return than the old way and keeps the soil intact for coming generations. We still have some of the kind of plowing Wood painted, of course, for not all farmers have come around yet, but the standpatters' ranks are being thinned by increasing conversions, and now and then by death.

To find out how "Spring Plowing" might have looked if the farmers had been plowing on the contour—or if Mr. Wood had painted them as they should have been plowed—I asked Soil Conservation Service technicians to "lay out the fields" in the painting according to soil and water conservation farming principles. What they came up with is shown in the diagrammatic drawing. I need not explain that this is not intended as a "correction" of Grant Wood's painting from the esthetic point of view.

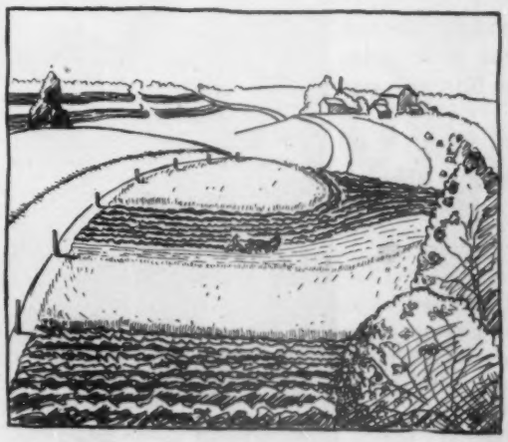
I realize this brings up some questions about painting—about art if you will—that never have been answered to the satisfaction of everybody and probably never will be.

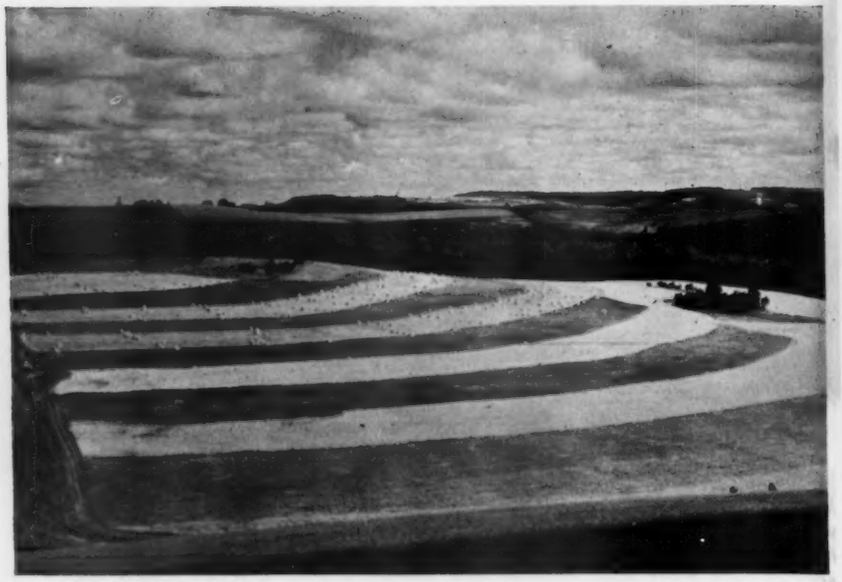
Is the artist supposed to record, or to interpret? To create or to copy? To report or editorialize?

In effect, Grant Wood recorded an unwise method of plowing. While he was recording a method, he might as well have recorded a good one as a bad one, particularly since the result would have been no less interesting and just possibly—with Wood's skill with sweeping curves—even *more* interesting. Further than this, I decline to comment—I could hardly hope to settle here what has not been settled since Art first began to be spelled with a capital A. Instead, I offer a few concepts which I think are beyond argument. The first of these applies to painters as artists, and the rest to painters as people—which, of course, is what they really are.

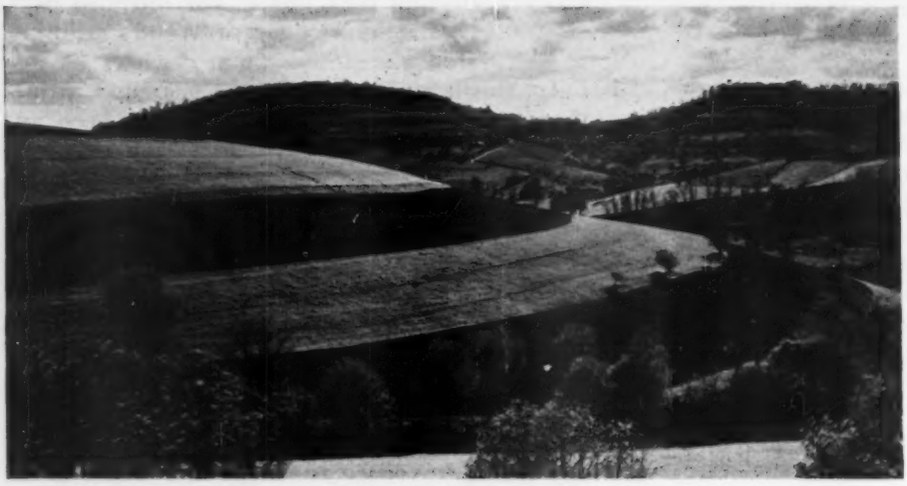
I believe that any painter engaged in recording or interpreting agricultural America must keep aware of

Grant Wood's fat, stylized landscapes are interesting in design and color, but the kind of farming he portrayed has cost Iowa millions of tons of her best topsoil in the last century and a half. For how the fields in "Spring Plowing" should have been planted for the good of the land, see the sketch below.





Strip-cropping on the contour, together with many accompanying practices, is creating an entirely new landscape over much of America, just as it is helping establish a new sort of agriculture. This new landscape ought to be painted.



The landscape painter who likes to work in bold colors and broad patterns can find in the new farming, possibilities that never before existed in all the broad expanse of rural America.

Bold new lines and designs, new rhythms and arrangements, inherent in the "new American landscape," free painters from restrictions imposed by old-fashioned farming methods. Contoured terraces lead the imagination as well as the eye.

There doesn't seem to be any real reason why landscape painters need limit themselves to one narrow viewpoint and look at everything only from the ground, now that we are living more and more in the heavens. The aerial viewpoint on contoured farmlands offers exciting new possibilities.

new trends in his sector of American life, and must duly set them down, if his record and interpretation are to amount to more than fragmentary comments. In any case, the artist had better keep up with progress, just to protect himself.

And now for Painters as People!

Painters eat food and wear clothing, the same as other people. They are citizens of the United States and are interested in their nation's future, like the rest of us. A large number of them own land.

Painters are parents and grandparents—like the rest of us—with descendants who will go on living here, and presumably will want food to eat and clothing to wear, too.

Therefore, I believe the painters—particularly those who interpret American agricultural life on canvas—have every right to know exactly what our soil situation is.

Since all our food, except seafood, comes from the soil, and since virtually all our clothing comes directly or indirectly from the land, the amount of good productive land we have is of the utmost importance to each of us—farmer or city dweller, artist or shopkeeper. The sober fact is, we have only about 460 million acres of really good land suitable for crops left in the United States, no matter what irresponsible statements you may hear from time to time. And erosion still is proceeding at a faster rate than we are getting control measures established.

So, if we want the United States to continue as one of the great nations of the earth and not eventually follow Mesopotamia and other lost civilizations into oblivion on the wings of erosion—

If we want our grandchildren and great grandchildren to have enough land when their time comes—

If we want to keep on eating—

Then we must conquer erosion, and manage the good land we have left so it will produce the most, and at the same time protect our soil against further exploitation. Conservation farming is the answer, and painters of American agriculture ought to know and apply it on canvas as well as on the land.

Perhaps gullies and duststorms *are* more dramatic in paintings than fields safely anchored by good cover crops and other proper farming practices. Well, war is more dramatic than peace, too, but—!

Familiar spots of color—houses in sunlight, long shadows cast in morning and evening, curving bands of contrasting colors—take on vastly different aspects and create new problems and opportunities for the painter when seen from the air. New physical viewpoints open up new emotional viewpoints.

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TAUBES (from page 48)

tions dwell on different planes, each having a different field of operation. One does not deny the other, but they are by no means inseparable companions. The question whether a painter should keep after the lucre or after immortality is decided for him by the nature of his talent; by his talent's volume, shape and scope.

A painter does not become a royal portraitist, a la Philip de Laszlo, for example, because he so chooses, but because his talent is eminently suited for such pursuits. Why Goya, another society portraitist, in spite of his superior art could please the inferior taste of his royal retainers—this circumstance is unexplicable.

Goya, as we know, wanted to please his patrons, but his portraits of Maria Luisa are not majestic—they are trollopish. On the other hand I have known many a painter who strove only to please his own artistic conscience and who, notwithstanding the purity of his mind, dwelt artistically in the lowlands. Probity is no proxy for talent.

Within the compound of one's talent, two elements—*facility* and *versatility*—make it possible for the painter to comply with the taste—usually dubious taste—of his employers. A versatile painter will apply himself in many ways other than his own. A painter who is not facile will escape many a slip, not because of his reluctance to sacrifice principle to circumstance, but because of the inability of his talent to conform.

THE ART MART

New Craft Catalogue

Fellowcrafters, Inc., 130 Clarendon St., Boston 16, Mass. has just issued its fourteenth catalog, which may be secured without charge on request to the company. It is a 650 page book filled with interesting descriptions of various craft materials suitable for therapeutic work in rehabilitation of injured service men, for school classes, for hobbyists and the like. Even under war limitations there are a surprisingly large number of items available. Some of them are, however, subject to priority regulations which are explained. Fields of craftwork covered include: Leathercraft, Costume Accessory Craft, Braiding and Knotting, Plastics, Casting, Beadcraft, Cork Craft, Fibre Craft, Block and Screen Process Printing, Woodenware, Pottery, Metalcraft, Airplane Model Building. Included also is a very convenient parcel post table.

Everyday Art

This is the title of a very attractive house publication issued every other month from September to June by the American Crayon Company, Dept. A-4, Sandusky, Ohio. This contains interesting news and comment on the trend of school and industrial arts. Further information may be secured by addressing the company.

THE X-ACTO KNIFE AS A DRAWING TOOL

Silk Screen Work

Silk screen printing is an amazingly versatile art which has invaded numerous fields. Printers use it for many purposes, as do manufacturers. It is popular in the craft field. As a fine art it has developed rapidly, the black and white drawing above, reproduced from the volume "Silk Screen Printing Process" by Biegeleisen and Busenback, gives but an inkling of its possibilities.

Silk screen printing is a stencil process. The silk used for the stencil or screen is stretched on a frame, hinged to permit raising and lowering. Part of this screen is blocked out, through the use of paper, lacquer, shellac, glue or like material, to form the design. With the silk stencil thus completed, paint or ink is forced through it (wherever the fabric is not covered by the mask) to form the finished print on the printing surface beneath. Thousands of prints can be made from one stencil. Often, however, several stencils are needed for a single design. In the case of color work, for example, a stencil is frequently made for each color, the print receiving one coating of paint after another.

While the process is perhaps at its best for relatively simple, poster-like work, complicated effects can be obtained when desired. Results can be unusually brilliant and clean-cut.

The X-Acto knives have many uses in connection with silk screen printing, particularly for the making of the stencils.

★

This advertisement is an adaptation of a page in TWELVE TECHNICS (left), a booklet of hints prepared by a leading authority for the artist, student, and teacher. A copy is yours for 10 cents.

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ROY BROWN, N.A., is one of the outstanding figures in American art. Born in Decatur, Illinois, he early studied at the Art Students League, then abroad with Ménard and Rafaelli in Paris. Since 1939 he has been the president of the American Watercolor Society, which recently held one of the most successful exhibitions in its history.

It was under his leadership that the New York Watercolor Club and the American Watercolor Society were merged, and also a section of watercolors was introduced into the structure of the National Academy. There is a very lively, stimulating quality in his watercolors. His work glows with a feeling of warmth and vitality characteristic of the best English tradition and mastery of this medium. Winner of the Salmagundi ($1000) Purchase Prize, 1930 . . . the Shaw ($1000) Purchase Prize, 1925 . . . American Watercolor Society Medal, 1937 and 1943. Altman Prize ($500) National Academy, 1926 . . . Peabody Prize, Baltimore Watercolor Club . . . and other awards.

The Metropolitan Museum acquired by purchase for its permanent collection, his "Maine Ledges," and he is represented in practically every important public museum and private collection . . . His summer studio is in Wilton, New Hampshire, while his winter studio is at 33 West 67th Street, N. Y. C., where museum requests for exhibitions of his work may be addressed.

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Roy Brown

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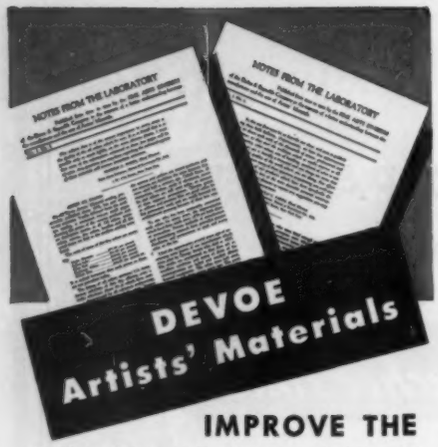

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I recall, for example, that once years ago when I fancied myself a painter, I was stranded for a number of days in a little country crossroads community, miles from any sizable town. The surroundings were enchanting and intriguing—I felt inspired to paint. But what could I use for materials?

Thinking longingly of my well-equipped studio, leagues away, would do no good, so, not too hopefully, I invaded the one store which the place afforded—an old-fashioned "general emporium." Through questioning and searching I finally assembled a few window shades, slightly soiled, a window screen with the screening out, some shellac, linseed oil, turpentine, white lead, and a limited assortment of paste colors such as house painters use for mixing paints. For a palette knife, I chose a kitchen spatula, and ground it down on the back-yard grindstone. A metal tray seemed a fine palette. For brushes I was limited to a few far-from-hopeful ten cent specimens an inch or so wide and annoyingly coarse, and some small, rather stiff ones that came with mucilage. Also, and the best in the lot, a "striper" made for striping the spokes of carriage wheels.

Not good, and yet not bad. In lieu of canvas, I stretched window shade material over the screen frame, shellacking it on both sides to stiffen and solidify it, and that was that.

As I loaded this ili-assorted paraphernalia onto my landlady's squeaking wheelbarrow, ready for my trek to the hunting grounds, I tried to beg, from her front parlor, the bamboo easel which supported in state the crayon portrait of her late-departed husband—as startling a bit of décor as I had seen for a long time. (The easel, I mean—*not* the husband!) This effort was a mistake. I was glad to settle for a couple of fence posts off the pile, and an axe from behind the shed door. She did loan me, however, one of those unpredictable folding chairs—"we keep it for funerals and sech!"

So down the cow lane and through the pasture I wended my noisome way, seeking a likely spot. This found, I unloaded my one-wheeler, and, climbing on it for height, I drove my stakes into the fallow soil at the right pitch to accommodate my "canvas," which I nailed firmly to the stake. Then I got under way.

It really wasn't so bad. The striper proved a remarkable tool—I used it for years afterward. For a hasty coating of my larger areas I relied mainly on one of

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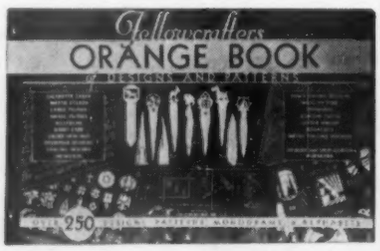

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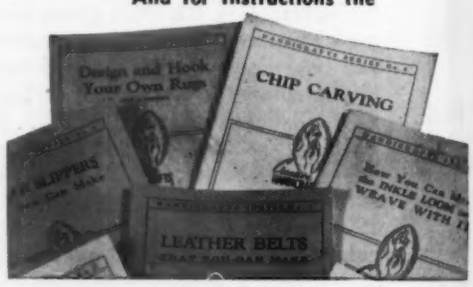

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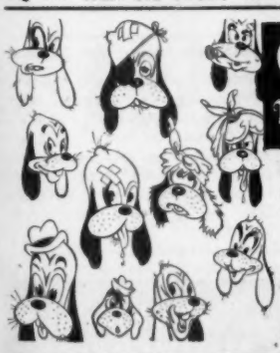

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ENDOW THE RED CROSS

the small house painter's brushes, and on my spatula. Actually I was bothered less by the lack of my customary impedimenta than by the cows. Did you ever paint where there are cows? Ah, then *you* know. I never saw a thing quite so curious as a cow, unless it is a group of two or more cows. Here there were seven. In times like the present, with steaks so scarce, it seems almost heresy to say a word against cows but on that day, so long ago, I said plenty. First they just stood a dozen rods away and stared at me. Next, they came meandering closer, and stared some more. When I shied a few rocks at them they gambolled playfully away; I went back to work. But not for long! Soon I found that while I had been preoccupied they had come up behind me, and were now sniffing at my travelling mélange. Then they got one look at my painting. That was enough. Tails up, they gallumphed into the mid-distance.

Where was I? Oh yes. So now I painted, undisturbed, missing this or that accustomed pigment, yet on the whole managing to record my subject matter with considerable fidelity. Yes, despite the unreasonable verdict of the cows, I fell quite in love with my work, pushing it forward indefatigably. In fact, I became so immersed that not until the light suddenly changed did I realize that a storm had developed behind me and was about to break. Taking one look at the threatening sky, I abandoned my masterpiece post-haste, and sought the shelter of a nearby grove.

And just in time! The storm struck. Wind, and over went my not-too-secure easel, bearing my painting with it. Rain, and a multitude of drops pelted my supine canvas! More wind, and clouds of leaves and dust. Hail! I closed my eyes; it was too much.

Yes, you have guessed the result. I have just called that painting my masterpiece, and such, indeed, it proved to be. When first I rescued it after the shower it looked ruined, but when I had picked off most of the leaves and straw and some of the gravel, the true worth of my work stood revealed. Instantly I realized that this painting had a something quite new to my product. When later it was exhibited, critics exclaimed over its inimitable technic, the vibration of its atmosphere, the fidelity of its earth tones, the unstudied disposition of its brush strokes, the quality of its quality!

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Sell-or-Swap Column

"I hope I'm not breaking quite all the rules by asking you to publish in your new column," writes Eldon Davis, "my request for a copy of the May-June issue of Professional Art Magazine for the year 1939. Would be interested in some other issues also, but especially want the one with the George Petty article."

"I would like to locate a #14 series 7 Winsor & Newton watercolor brush," writes David Lyle Millard. "I have 4½ doz. brushes series 7, W & N—new or slightly used. I would be happy to swap several of these for a #14 or if not that size a #12. I have 1 doz. #1, series 7 and from there on they vary—3 #3's, #4's, 6 #5's a #6, several #7's and the rest #8's. All series #7. Sable, all new—open to any swap deal. I also have a great variety of W & N watercolors in tubes that I will swap for a #14. I am also looking for Mussini and Rubens oil bristle brushes—will apply swap or cash for these."

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HARTLEY (from page 18)

tainly did not know what it meant, if it meant anything at all."

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BOOKS

The Last Flowering of the Middle Ages. By Baron Joseph van der Elst, Doubleday, Doran, New York. $7.50.

Diplomat, lecturer and authority on Flemish Art, Baron van der Elst addresses this volume to "the people of my second home, the United States . . . , in the hope that they may find in this record of the painters and people of old Flanders many of the fundamentals of our common Western civilization . . ." The story starts with a description of the marriage of Margaret of York and the Duke of Burgundy. Flemish prosperity and power growing from the influence of trade and the rise of the towns led to pageantry, lavish display and the consummation of artistic effort; and added to the history of painting names like Van Eyck, Memling, Van der Weyden and the other Flemish masters. There are 16 full page plates in color and 96 black and white illustrations. In colorful prose the author describes the customs, costumes, and daily lives of painters and townspeople, dukes and mystics of the Middle Ages, and adds a critical analysis of the Flemish style of painting.

Yesterday's Children. Drawings by Pavel Tchelitchew. Poem by Parker Tyler, Harper, New York. $3.00.

Thirty full page reproductions of ink and wash drawings which were the preliminary sketches of the painting, "Hide and Seek," owned by the Museum of Modern Art, make up the pictorial content of this book. The drawings consist of fanciful conceptions of children at play, including touches of primitive savagery as concomitants of childhood. The accompanying poem by Parker Tyler follows the spirit of the drawings in imaginative free verse.

Painting and Painters. By Lionello Venturi, Scribner's, New York. $3.50.

The sub-title of this book is "How to Look at a Picture—Giotto to Chagall." The author introduces his treatise by remarking, "It is not true that any one can judge a work of art by merely listening to his naked soul;" that artistic judgment is dependent upon artistic sensibility. The chapters that follow are analyses of fifty of the important paintings from the 14th century to the present, and contain a study of esthetic discrimination; in this study are suggestions as to how to distinguish the transient from the lasting in works of art. The discussion includes descriptions of definite qualities—found in both realistic and abstract painting—which, combined and molded by the personality of the painter, the author considers expressions of universal truths. The book contains 53 black and white reproductions.

How to Draw Hands. By Oliver Senior, Studio, New York. $1.00.

The "Life" master of the Eastbourne School of Art presents an exhaustive study of one of the artist's most difficult subjects. In 63 pages with text and 18 plates he illustrates men's, women's and infants' hands in a variety of poses.

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Probably the most fully representative collection of contemporary American paintings available within the covers of a book is presented in this volume. Over 100 articles are included. 42 paintings reproduced in full color. Short explanation of the pictures and biographical material on the artists accompany each reproduction. The collection includes the academic and impressionistic schools and various shadings of each. Quality of paper and reproduction up to pre-paper restriction standards. The selection was made by an eminent group of artists and critics—a book of extraordinary value. $5.00.

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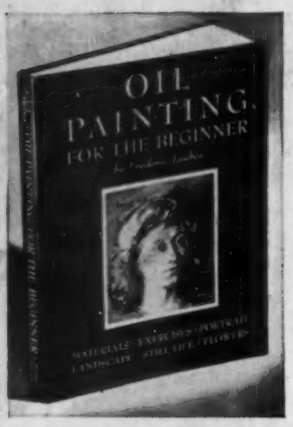

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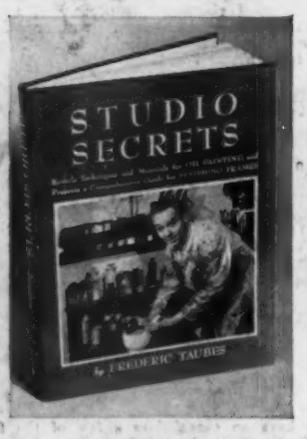

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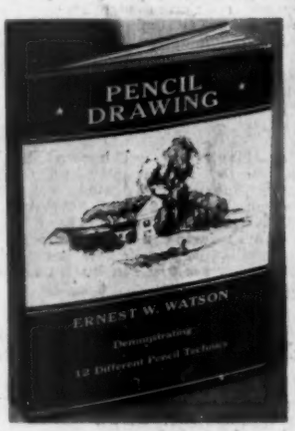

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